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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997

Standards of accommodation for air travel

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly decisions 44/442 of 21 December 1989 and 46/450 of 20 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to submit to it annual reports on standards of accommodation for air travel. It covers the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997. As also requested by the Assembly in its decision 40/455 of 18 December 1985 and section XIII of its resolution 45/248 A of 21 December 1990, respectively, information is included on expenditures by the United Nations for first-class air travel and on the meetings attended by eminent persons for whom exceptions have been made for first-class air travel.

2. During the period under review, standards of accommodation for air travel were governed by General Assembly resolution 42/214 of 21 December 1987, in which the Assembly decided that all individuals, with the exception of the Secretary-General and the heads of delegations of the least developed countries to the regular and special sessions of the Assembly, whose travel was financed by United Nations organizations and programmes and who had been previously entitled to first-class accommodation, would be required to travel at the class immediately below first class. In the same resolution, the Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class travel on a case-by-case basis.

II. DELEGATION TRAVEL

3. As indicated in paragraph 2, General Assembly resolution 42/214 limits the payment of first-class accommodation by air to one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country attending the regular and special

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3. As indicated in paragraph 2, General Assembly resolution 42/214 limits the payment of first-class accommodation by air to one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country attending the regular and special sessions of the Assembly. For the fifty-first session, for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 claims submitted to date involved 29 such journeys at a cost of $145,856. Claims for such travel relating to the nineteenth special session of the Assembly have not yet been submitted.

4. The claims in respect of first-class travel for one representative of each Member State designated as a least developed country relating to the fiftieth session of the General Assembly involved 34 journeys at a cost of $168,790.[1]

III. EXCEPTIONS AUTHORIZED BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

5. As stated above, in General Assembly resolution 42/214, the Secretary-General was authorized to exercise his discretion in making exceptions to allow first-class air travel on a case-by-case basis. In addition, business-class travel by air may be authorized by the Secretary-General in certain circumstances, in accordance with administrative instruction ST/AI/249/Rev.3 of 29 March 1989.

6. Generally, in reviewing cases that may warrant an exception, the Secretary-General takes into consideration the following circumstances:

(a) Where a medical condition may exist necessitating a level of comfort not available in the normal standard of accommodation to which the traveller is entitled. Such cases are referred to the Director of the Medical Services Division of the Secretariat for recommendation. It should be noted that the practice of granting exceptions in cases where a traveller is of an advanced age has been discontinued;

(b) Where the normal standard of accommodation is not available and, owing to the exigencies of the service, the traveller is required to travel on a particular date. Cases also arise where accommodation at the normal entitlement is not available and the cost of daily subsistence allowance, while waiting for the next available seat, would be greater than the higher standard of travel;

(c) Where the traveller is considered an eminent person, such as a former head of State, or a prominent figure in political, humanitarian or cultural areas;

(d) Where the traveller is a prominent person who is donating his or her services free of charge to the Organization, and, in some cases, at a loss of personal income, such individuals may be accorded the standard of accommodation that they normally use when travelling;

(e) When the traveller, after completing a full day of work, is required to travel through the night in order to resume work, attend meetings or present a paper at another location on the following morning or immediately upon arrival. Where such cases involve arduous journeys, it has been deemed reasonable that the standard of accommodation accorded to the traveller should

provide the best rest possible while travelling, or provide the conditions most conducive to work while flying, or both.

7. In respect of exceptions to air travel authorized during the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 owing to the circumstances mentioned above, the present report provides, in annexes I to V, detailed information as to the additional cost of, and reasons for, such exceptions.

8. For travel during the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997, the Secretary-General exercised his discretion by authorizing, as an exception, 25 cases of first-class air travel. In addition, during the same period, the Secretary-General authorized business-class travel by air as an exception to the standards of accommodation in 23 cases.

9. It should be noted that, during the period under review, the Secretary-General or his designated representative was accompanied on all trips by a personal aide/security officer who travelled by air in first class.

10. The total additional cost incurred by the Organization for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 was $54,303, about 28 per cent less than the total additional cost of $75,070 for the reporting period from 1 July 1995 to 30 June 1996, or about 58 per cent less than the total additional cost of $128,203 for the reporting period from 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995.

11. For purposes of comparison, tables 1 and 2 provide a summary, by category, of all exceptions granted during the present and previous reporting periods. The number of exceptions decreased for the second consecutive reporting period, from 139 exceptions in 1994-1995 to 64 exceptions in 1995-1996 period and to 48 exceptions in the current reporting period. As indicated in table 1, while the number of exceptions and the corresponding additional cost increased in respect of the travel of individuals donating their services free of charge to the Organization, there was significant decrease in the number and the associated additional cost of exceptions granted for cases involving certified medical conditions, for eminent persons and for cases where the normal standard of accommodation was not available. There was one case of exception which involved arduous journey during the reporting period.

12. In the context of monitoring adherence to the standards of accommodation for air travel, cases were identified in which air travel was undertaken at a standard of accommodation higher than normal entitlement, for which no exception had been sought or granted. In such cases, subsequent ex post facto approval was sought for an exception to the standards of accommodation. The details of such ex post facto exceptions authorized by the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period, are outlined in annex VI to the present report.

Table 1. Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1996-30 June 1997

(Cost in United States dollars)

Reasons for exceptions	First class		Business class		Total	
	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost
Medical condition	-	0	3	1 045	3	1 045
Regular standard of accommodation not available	5	622	4	731	8	1 353
Eminent persons	2	3 300	12	2 984	14	6 284
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	6	13 017	4	4 646	10	17 663
Arduous journeys	0	0				
Personal aides/ security officer	11	26 737	-	-	11	26 737
Total	25	44 897	23	9 406	48	54 303

Table 2. Summary of exceptions, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996[a]

(Cost in United States dollars)

Reasons for exceptions	First class		Business class		Total	
	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost	Number of trips	Additional cost
Medical condition or advanced age	2	2 491	8	10 103	10	12 594
Regular standard of accommodation not available	10	6 096	8	1 243	18	7 339
Eminent persons	7	12 137	11	5 993	18	18 130
Donating services free of charge to the Organization	2	7 055	4	7 230	6	14 285
Arduous journeys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personal aides/ security officer	12	22 722	0	0	12	22 722
Total	33	50 501	31	24 569	64	75 070

[a] Adjusted for ex post facto authorizations that related to the previous reporting period but were not included in the previous report (A/C.5/51/18).

Notes

[1] The total expenditure and the number of journeys are adjusted to reflect the claims for reimbursement of tickets for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly which were submitted after 30 June 1996 and which were not included in the report of the Secretary-General for the previous reporting period (A/C.5/51/18).

ANNEX I

Exceptions authorized owing to medical condition, 1 July 1996-30 June 1997

Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
None		-
Subtotal		-
B. Business class		
1. Member, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	London/Amsterdam/London	86
2. Member, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility	London/Nairobi/London	875
3. Member, Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the Global Environment Facility	London/Amsterdam/London	84
Subtotal		1 045
Total		1 045

ANNEX II

Exceptions authorized when the regular standard of accommodation was not available, 1 July 1996-30 June 1997

Designation of traveller	Itinerary[a]	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
1. Staff member, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) . .	.../Nairobi/Dar es Salaam/...	65
2. Staff member, UNHCR .	.../Nairobi/Addis Ababa	125
3. Staff member, United Nations Development Programme	New York/Islamabad/New York	333
4. Staff member, UNHCR .	.../Tindouf/Algiers/...	40
5. Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund . . .	.../Nairobi/Kigali/...	59
Subtotal		622
B. Business class		
1. Consultant, Department of Political Affairs	Oslo/New York	247
2. Staff member, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	.../Bahrain/Riyadh	17
3. Staff member, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Occupied Territories	.../Amsterdam/Tel Aviv	229
4. Interviewee for the position of a Business Relations Coordinator, United Nations Office for Project Services	Stockholm/New York/Stockholm	238
Subtotal		731
Total		1 353

[a] The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

ANNEX III

Exceptions authorized for eminent persons,
1 July 1996-30 June 1997

Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
Sasakawa Prize Selection Committee		
1. Chairman of the Committee	Bogota/Geneva/Bogota	1 779
2. Committee member . .	Bangkok/Geneva/Bangkok	1 521
Total, A		3 300
B. Business class		
International NGO Meeting/European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine		
1. Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and Member of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	New York/Geneva/New York	790
Subtotal		790
Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure		
2. Secretary of State, Cambodia	Phnom Penh/Delhi/Phnom Penh	140
3. Deputy Minister of Economy, Kazakhstan .	Almaty/Delhi/Almaty	50
4. Minister for Communication, Transport, Post and Construction, Lao People's Democratic Republic	Vientiane/Delhi/Vientiane	200
5. Minister for Transport and Communication, Maldives	Male/Delhi/Male	250

Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
6. Minister for Works and Transport, Nepal . .	Kathmandu/Delhi/Kathmandu	50
7. Minister of Transport, Viet Nam	Ho Chi Minh City/Delhi/Ho Chi Minh City	150
8. Deputy Minister of Transport, Uzbekistan	Tashkent/Delhi/Tashkent	250
Subtotal		1 090
Preparation for the Summit of Heads of State of the Americas		
9. Member, Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Environment and Development	Quito/New York/Quito	174
10. Member, Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Environment and Development	Mexico City/New York/Mexico City	382
11. Member, Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Environment and Development	Bogota/New York/Bogota	274
12. Member, Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Environment and Development	Bogota/New York/Bogota	274
Subtotal		1 104
Total, B		2 984
Grand total, A and B		6 284

ANNEX IV

Exceptions authorized for prominent persons donating their services free of charge to the Organization, 1 July 1996-30 June 1997

Designation of traveller	Itinerary[a]	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
1. Special Representative, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	.../Chicago/London/Delhi/Hong Kong/San Francisco/Denver	2 058
2. Special Representative, UNICEF	San Salvador/Los Angeles/ San Salvador	2 044
3. Personal Envoy of the, Secretary-General . . .	Houston/Casablanca/London/ Houston	2 533
4. Advisor to the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General	Washington, D.C./Rabat/London/ Washington, D.C.	2 444
5. Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General . . .	Houston/London/Houston	2 660
6. Advisor to the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General	Baltimore/London/ Washington, D.C.	1 278
Total, A		13 017
B. Business class		
Discussion on "Some global economic issues" at the Second Committee of the General Assembly		
1. Director, Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales, Paris	Paris/New York/Paris	1 111
Subtotal		1 111

Designation of traveller	Itinerary*	Additional cost (United States dollars)
Experts' Meeting on Lessons Learned, Department of Peacekeeping Operations		
2. Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General . . .	London/New York/London	3 075
Subtotal		3 075
Symposium on "Development challenges and opportunities for Asia and the Pacific in the twenty-first century and the role of ESCAP"		
3. Resource person for the symposium	Jakarta/Shanghai/Jakarata	313
4. Resource person for the symposium	Bangkok/Shanghai/Bangkok	147
Subtotal		460
Total, B		4 646
Grand total, A and B		17 663

* The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.

ANNEX V

Exceptions authorized for cases involving arduous journey, 1 July 1996-30 June 1997

Designation of traveller	Itinerary	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
1. Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs . . .	New York/Brussels/New York	1 221
Subtotal		1 221
B. Business class		
None		-
Subtotal		-
Total		1 221

ANNEX VI

Exceptions relating to the previous reporting period, 1 July 1995-30 June 1996

Reason for exception/ designation of traveller	Itinerary[a]	Additional cost (United States dollars)
A. First class		
Normal standard of accommodation not available		
Under-Secretary-General for Special Assignment	Lagos/Abuja/Lagos	67
B. Business class		
Normal standard of accommodation not available		
Minister of Environment and Protection of Nature, Senegal	Dakar/Geneva/...	123
Total		190

[a] The points of ellipses in a given itinerary indicate that some legs of the itinerary were by regular standard of accommodation and no exception was involved.